N.C.'s The Othermothers play Coffeehouse Friday

By MARK WOODLIEF
and TODD GOSS

One of North Carolina's most celebrated bands — at home and overseas — The Othermothers will be in the flesh and in concert Friday at The Coffeehouse on East Campus.

Highly praised for their 1985 debut "No Place Like Home," on England's Making Waves records, The Othermothers headline a double-bill with fellow Greensboro native Eugene Chadbourne.

The Othermothers formed about three and a half years ago, after the five members (Al Cowett — bass, vocals; Dan Cowett — keyboards, vocals; Tom Cowett —drums; Randall McCorquodale — lead guitar, vocals; Steve King — guitar) moved on from high school bands and orchestras, bought guitars and began to write their own songs.

Guitarist King explained the band's approach to songwriting: "We're very unscientific, very unmethodical. We just go down into the basement, turn on the amps and start. We never sat down and said 'Let's come up with this type of sound.'"

Their sound and style impressed Making Waves president Barry Martin, who first heard The Othermothers courtesy of Spectator magazine's Godfrey Cheshire. Cheshire compiled three tapes of North Carolina's best young bands and took the tapes to record companies while on vacation in England. Martin took an immediate liking to The Othermothers.

In an interview this summer, Martin gave them five-star ratings. "They are, I think, one of the finest bands I've ever seen," Martin said. "They're young, snotty, they're loud and they play great. They write real good songs and they're confident. And they have a charisma which very few bands have."

"No Place Like Home" fared well for the band, reaching number three on the independent charts of Melody Maker magazine in England. When the record initially hit the stores, there was talk of an Othermothers overseas tour, but scheduling and promoting problems forced a cancellation. "We had our feet on and off the plane," King said. "It was a disappointment. It would have really helped us in the States." "Home" has been distributed in several countries, including Canada, France, Britain and the U.S.

The audience should expect high-energy rock 'n' roll. King describes the band: "[They] blend '70s hard rock and pop with the best of the stuff from the '80s." The Othermothers offer power and melody, energy and subtlety, and put on one hot show.

Sharing the bill with The Othermothers will be one of North Carolina's most eccentric musicians, Eugene Chadbourne. Chadbourne, a veteran of the now-defunct band Shockabilly, has released over 30 LPs, and they range from country picking to nails-on-a-blackboard noise. His cult following is intense in America and worldwide. He has played live and/or on albums with Ed Saunders of the Fugs, Fred Frith, Camper Van Beethoven and the Violent Femmes, who backed up Chadbourne on his latest release, "Corpses of Foreign Wars," a collection of modern-day protest songs.

"Corpses" and it's predecessor, "Country Protest," showcase Chadbourne's knack for rearranging popular favorites. "Medley in C" on "Country Protest" combined portions of songs by Black Flag, Procol Harum, Louis Armstrong, Willie Nelson and the Butthole Surfers.

Live, Chadbourne is (in)famous for his use of an electrified garden rake and countrified acoustic guitar, punctuated with healthy distortion. There's no one in the world quite like Eugene Chadbourne — somehow he makes this state a little bit cooler. Get to the Coffeehouse early to see one of the true underground legends of rock.

Doors open at 10 p.m., tickets are $2 with a Duke I.D. Sponsored by WXDU, Duke student radio.